

There are currently over 100,000 Virginians with Alzheimer's and related dementias. Over 700,000 Virginians, including those diagnosed, their families, and their caregivers, are affected by this disease. Many of your employees may currently be dealing with the tremendous financial, emotional, and physical burden within their families.

Studies have shown that 78% of Alzheimer's caregivers work outside of the home. Because of this, Alzheimer's disease has a significant impact on businesses as well as individuals. The estimated annual cost of Alzheimer's disease to Virginia businesses is nearly \$850 million per year based upon caregiver absenteeism and related costs. And this impact will continue to escalate with the aging of the baby boomers.

In response to this need, we are providing you with this packet of reproducible resource information that may prove valuable to your employees. Further support and information can be obtained by contacting the appropriate Virginia chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. Chapter contact information and service areas are provided in addition to basic information regarding Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

The Alzheimer's Association is the primary support network and information resource for those diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related disorders, their families, and their caregivers. The Alzheimer's Association provides support from the first signs of memory loss through diagnosis and throughout the disease's progression.

Included in this packet is the following resource information:

- Is it Alzheimer's Disease? Ten Warning Signs
- Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Fact Sheet
- List of Chapter Services and Support
- Safe Return Registration Form
- Virginia Chapter List
- Virginia Chapter Area Map

In addition to providing support for individuals, loved ones, and caregivers, the Alzheimer's Association also offers a wide array of community education and outreach services. If you would like to arrange a presentation for your employees regarding Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, please contact your local chapter to discuss your needs and the services that are available in your area.

Individuals dealing with the affects of Alzheimer's disease need information, support, and encouragement. The Virginia chapters of the Alzheimer's Association are available to provide just that. We hope that you find this information helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact your local chapter for further information and support.



## **Is it Alzheimer's Disease? Ten Warning Signs**

### **1. Recent Memory Loss That Affects Job Performance**

It's normal to occasionally forget assignments, colleagues' names or an associate's telephone number, but remember them later on. Those with a dementia such as Alzheimer's disease, may forget things more often and not remember later. They may repeatedly ask the same question, not remembering either the answer or that they have already asked the question.

### **2. Difficulty Performing Familiar Tasks**

Busy people can be distracted from time to time and leave the carrots on the stove, only remembering to serve them at the end of the meal. People with Alzheimer's disease could prepare a meal, forget to serve it, and even forget that they made it.

### **3. Problems With Language**

Everyone has trouble finding the right word sometimes, but can finish the sentence with another appropriate word. A person with Alzheimer's disease may forget simple words, or substitute inappropriate words, making their sentence incomprehensible.

### **4. Disorientation of Time and Place**

It's normal to forget the day of the week or your destination for a moment. But people with Alzheimer's disease can become lost on their own street or in a familiar shopping mall, not knowing where they are, how they got there, or how to get home.

### **5. Poor or Decreased Judgement**

People can become so immersed in an activity or telephone conversation, they temporarily forget the child that they are watching. A person with Alzheimer's disease could entirely forget the child under their care and leave the house to visit a neighbor.

## **6. Problems with Abstract Thinking**

People who normally balance their checkbooks may be momentarily disconcerted when the task is more complicated than usual, but will eventually figure out the solution. Someone with Alzheimer's disease could forget completely what the numbers are and what to do with them.

## **7. Misplacing Things**

Anyone can misplace their wallet or keys, but eventually find them by reconstructing where they could have left them. A person with Alzheimer's disease may put things in inappropriate places – an iron in the freezer, or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl — and not be able to retrieve them.

## **8. Changes in Mood or Behavior**

Everyone has a bad day once in a while, or may become sad or moody from time to time. Someone with Alzheimer's disease can exhibit rapid mood swings for no apparent reason; e.g., from calm to tears to anger to calm in a few minutes.

## **9. Changes in Personality**

People's personalities ordinarily change somewhat at different ages, as character traits strengthen or mellow. But a person with Alzheimer's disease can change drastically, becoming extremely irritable, suspicious or fearful.

## **10. Loss of Initiative**

It is normal to tire of housework, business activities or social obligations, but most people regain their initiative. The person with Alzheimer's disease may become very passive and require cues and prompting to get them involved in activities.

*These warning signs also may apply to dementias other than Alzheimer's disease. People concerned about these warning signs should see a physician for a complete examination. For more information on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, contact your local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, the national website at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) or our national office at (800) 621-0379.*

## **Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Fact Sheet**

### **What is Dementia?**

Dementia is a loss of mental function in two or more areas such as language, memory, visual and spatial abilities, or judgment severe enough to interfere with daily life. Dementia itself is not a disease but a broader set of symptoms that accompanies certain disease or physical conditions. Well-known diseases that cause dementia include Alzheimer's disease, multi-infarct dementia, Parkinson's disease, Huntington's disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Pick's disease, and Lewy body dementia. Other physical conditions that may cause or mimic dementia are depression, brain tumors, head injuries, nutritional deficiencies, hydrocephalus, infections (AIDS, meningitis, syphilis), drug reactions, and thyroid problems. **Individuals experiencing dementia-like symptoms should undergo diagnostic testing as soon as possible.** An early and accurate diagnosis helps to identify reversible conditions, gives patients a greater chance of benefiting from existing treatments, and allows them and their families more time to plan for the future.

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**Alzheimer's Disease** - Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most common cause of dementia, affecting over 4 million Americans. AD is a degenerative disease that attacks the brain, begins gradually, and progresses at a variable rate. AD results in impaired memory, thinking, and behavior, and can last from 3 to 20 years from the time of onset of symptoms. Warning signs of AD are memory loss that affects job/home skills, difficulty performing familiar tasks, problems finding the right words, disorientation as to time and place, poor or decreased judgment, difficulty with learning and abstract thinking, placing things in inappropriate places, changes in mood and personality, and marked loss of initiative. In the last stages of AD, patients are unable to take care of themselves. Recent research has shown links between particular genes and AD, but in about 90% of AD cases, there is no clear genetic link. With the help of standardized diagnostic criteria, physicians can now diagnose AD with an accuracy of 85-90% once symptoms occur. However, a definitive diagnosis of AD is possible only through the examination of brain tissue at autopsy.

**Multi-Infarct Dementia** - Multi-infarct dementia (MID), or vascular dementia, is a deterioration of mental capacity caused by multiple strokes (infarcts) in the brain. These events may be described as mini-strokes, where small blood vessels in the brain become blocked by blood clots, causing the destruction of brain tissue. The onset of MID may seem relatively sudden, as it may take several strokes for symptoms to appear. These strokes may damage areas of the brain responsible for a specific function as well as produce general symptoms of dementia. As a result, MID is sometimes misdiagnosed as Alzheimer's disease. MID is not reversible or curable, but detection of high blood pressure and other vascular risk factors can lead to a specific treatment that may modify MID's progression. MID is usually diagnosed through neurological examination and brain scan techniques, such as a computerized tomography (CT) scan or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

**Parkinson's Disease** - Parkinson's disease (PD) is a progressive disorder of the central nervous system that affects over one million Americans. In PD certain brain cells deteriorate for reasons not yet known. These cells produce a substance called dopamine, which helps control muscle

activity. PD is often characterized by tremors, stiffness in limbs and joints, speech difficulties, and difficulty initiating physical movement. Late in the course of the disease, some patients develop dementia and eventually Alzheimer's disease. Conversely, some Alzheimer's patients develop symptoms of Parkinson's. Medications such as levodopa, which converts to dopamine inside the brain, and deprenyl, which prevents degeneration of dopamine-containing brain cells, are used to improve diminished or reduced motor symptoms in PD patients but do not correct the mental changes that occur.

**Huntington's Disease** - Huntington's disease (HD) is an inherited, degenerative brain disease that causes both physical and mental disabilities and usually begins in mid-life. Early symptoms can vary from person to person but include involuntary movement of the limbs or facial muscles, difficulty concentrating, and depression. Other symptoms include personality change, memory disturbance, slurred speech, and impaired judgment. Children born to a person with HD have a 50% chance of inheriting the gene that causes HD. Today a genetic test is available to confirm a diagnosis of HD and to identify carriers of the HD gene. It is recommended that anyone considering genetic testing talk first with family and/or appropriate medical and counseling professionals. There is no treatment to stop the progression of HD, but the movement disturbances and psychiatric symptoms can be treated with medication.

**Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease** - Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) is a rare, fatal brain disorder that causes rapid progressive dementia and other neuromuscular disturbances. CJD is caused by a transmissible agent. Research suggests that the agent differs significantly from viruses and other conventional agents. This newly discovered pathogen is called a "prion," short for "proteinaceous infectious particle," because it consists of protein and transforms normal protein molecules into infectious ones. The disease can be inherited, but the majority of cases are not. Early symptoms of CJD include failing memory, changes in behavior, and lack of coordination. As the disease advances, usually very rapidly, mental deterioration becomes pronounced, involuntary movements (especially muscle jerks) appear, and the patient experiences severe difficulty with sight, muscular energy, and coordination. Like Alzheimer's disease, a definitive diagnosis of CJD can be obtained only through examination of brain tissue at autopsy.

**Pick's Disease** - Pick's disease is also a rare brain disorder, characterized by shrinkage of the tissues of the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain and by the presence of abnormal bodies (Pick's bodies) in the nerve cells of the affected areas of the brain. Pick's disease usually begins between the ages of 40 and 60. The symptoms are similar to Alzheimer's disease, with a loss of language abilities, skilled movement, and the ability to recognize objects or people. Initial diagnosis is based on family history (Pick's disease may be inherited), symptoms, tests, and ruling out other causes of dementia. A definitive diagnosis of Pick's disease is usually obtained at autopsy.

**Lewy Body Dementia** - Lewy body dementia (LBD) is an irreversible form of dementia associated with abnormal protein deposits in the brain called Lewy bodies. Symptoms of LBD are similar to Alzheimer symptoms and include memory loss, confusion, and difficulty communicating. Hallucinations and paranoia also may become apparent in the earlier stages of the disease and often last throughout the disease process. Although initial symptoms of LBD may be mild, affected individuals eventually develop severe cognitive impairment. At this time, there is no treatment available for Lewy body dementia.

*For more information on Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, contact your local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, the national website at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) or our national office at (800) 621-0379.*



## **Chapter Services and Support**

The Alzheimer's Association Chapters in Virginia provide many support services **free of charge to families** dealing with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia.

### **Information and Referral**

**Helpline** – Extensive information is available on Alzheimer's disease, referrals to community resources and services, and up-to-date information on research and medications.

**Lending Library** – A variety of books and videos on the disease itself and related caregiving issues are available for loan at Chapter offices.

**Newsletter** – Periodic publications that provide readers with updates on support services, caregiving tips, research, Chapter news, and support group information.

### **Support Groups**

These local groups enable people with Alzheimer's disease, their friends, and their families to share practical information, caregiving tips, problem solving techniques, emotional support, and new ways of coping with dementia.

### **Community Education**

We provide community education and outreach, including workshops and conferences, health fairs, and presentations to schools, civic and service groups, and local faith and business communities.

### **Safe Return**

A nationwide identification, support, and registration program that provides assistance to people with memory impairment who become lost—locally or far away from home. The program is based on the use of identification bracelets and a national database of contact information. Scholarships may be available through your local chapter to cover the cost of the program for those in need.

### **Advocacy and Public Policy**

Chapter staff and volunteers meet with legislators in Richmond and Washington, D.C. annually to advocate for Alzheimer's research, caregiver support, and legislative issues of interest to those affected by Alzheimer's disease.

### **Support for National Research and Education**

A percentage of donated funds go to the National Alzheimer's Association to support research and education.

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Someone to Stand by You

## Virginia Chapters

### Central and Western Virginia Chapter

#### **Charlottesville Regional Office**

490 Westfield Road, Suite 102  
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Phone: (434) 973-6122  
Toll free: (888) 432-9061  
Fax: (434) 973-4224

#### **Harrisonburg Regional Office**

P.O. Box 310  
Harrisonburg, VA 22803-0310

Phone: (540) 568-6454  
Toll free: (888) 432-9061  
Fax: (540) 568-6409

#### **Roanoke Regional Office**

2728 Colonial Avenue, Suite 2  
Roanoke, VA 24015

Phone: (540) 345-7600  
Toll free: (877) 345-7500  
Fax: (540) 345-7900

#### **Lynchburg Regional Office**

P.O. Box 823  
Lynchburg, VA 24505

Phone: (434) 845-8540  
Fax: (434) 845-8378

### **Greater Richmond Chapter**

4600 Cox Road, Suite 130  
Glen Allen, VA 23060

Phone: (804) 967-2580  
Toll free: (800) 598-4673  
Fax: (804) 967-2588

#### **Fredericksburg Branch Office**

2217 Princess Anne St., Ste. 204-1  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Phone: (540) 370-0835  
Toll free: (800) 598-4673  
Fax: (540) 370-4976

#### **Middle Peninsula/Northern Neck**

P.O. Box 1881  
Gloucester, VA 23061

Phone: (804) 695-9382  
Toll free: (800) 598-4673  
Fax: (804) 695-9278

### **National Capital Area Chapter**

11240 Waples Mill Road, Suite 402  
Fairfax, VA 22030

Toll free: (866) 259-0042  
Fax: (703) 359-4441

### **Southeastern Virginia Chapter**

#20 Interstate Commerce Center, Suite 233  
Norfolk, VA 23502

Phone: (757) 459-2405  
Toll free: (800) 755-1129  
Fax: (757) 461-7902

#### **Franklin Branch Office**

100 W. Fourth Avenue  
P.O. Box 1224  
Franklin, VA 23851-1224

Phone: (757) 569-1650  
Fax: (757) 569-0419

#### **South Hill Branch Office**

P.O. Box 310  
South Hill, VA 23970

Phone: (434) 447-3963  
Fax: (434) 447-9024

#### **Williamsburg Branch Office**

263 McLaws Circle, Suite 203  
Williamsburg, VA 23185

Phone: (757) 221-7272  
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